

Fact Sheet

~~For Background Use Only~~
August 1964

INDIA, PAKISTAN AND KASHMIR

Hindu-Moslem enmity is centuries old; India-Pakistan enmity dates from the blood bath of 1947 when the former British India received independence and immediately broke along religious lines into India and Pakistan. The principal, but not the sole, dispute between the two countries today is over Kashmir which lies between West Pakistan and India, bordered by Communist China and Afghanistan.

Background: In 1947 the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was ruled by a Hindu Maharajah. The predominantly Moslem population, fearing that he would accede to India following partition, revolted in August. Two months later the Maharajah, unable to put down the rebellion which by this time included some Pakistani army units, did accede to India and ask for military assistance, which was promptly granted. A cease-fire between Pakistan and India was finally arranged with the help of a United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) on 1 January 1949. The truce agreement left India occupying roughly two-thirds of Kashmir including the Vale, and Pakistan the remainder which it calls Azad ("free") Kashmir. It also provided for a withdrawal of military forces and a plebiscite to be held under UNCIP administration. These provisions have never been carried out despite numberless UNCIP proposals, Security Council debates and direct negotiations between the contenders. This uneasy truce prevails today, broken by occasional border incidents and afflicted by rising communal tensions.

Current status. Meanwhile a new and extremely significant element entered the India-Pakistan picture. In October 1962 Communist China invaded India's northern territories and the US and UK came to India's assistance by supplying weapons and aircraft for her defense, as they continue to do. In December 1962 the Chinese called a ceasefire but have never accepted, as India has, the Colombo* plan proposals for troop withdrawals as a pre-condition to direct negotiations on the border problem.

Pakistan professes to see no further Chinese threat to India. Her fears of India have therefore persuaded her that India is arming to attack Pakistan. In the face of this presumed Indian threat Pakistan has moved closer to Communist China and away from her Western SEATO and CENTO partners who are arming India. In early 1964 Pakistan signed a cultural agreement with China, following another symbol of Sino-Pakistani friendship -- Chinese Premier Chou En-lai's state visit to Pakistan. Within the year the two countries have signed a trade agreement, a civil air agreement giving Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) landing rights in China (and thus providing ready access for Communist Chinese travellers to the Middle East and Africa) and a border agreement. [Note: The establishment of PIA service is significant because the People's Republic of China has landing rights in Pakistan which it has not used.] A secret pact, enlarging the understanding between the two countries, has been widely rumored but is firmly denied by Pakistan. China has rewarded Pakistan with endorsement of her demand for a plebiscite in Kashmir.

*Proposals put forward by Ceylon, Ghana, UAR, Indonesia, Cambodia, Burma
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India reacted sharply to Pakistan's growing ties with Communist China, charging that the new agreements give aid and comfort to India's mortal enemy. The border agreement provisionally ceded to China portions of Kashmir which India claims are still in dispute. She fears that a renewed Chinese attack (the sole reason for arming herself) might be assisted by this growing friendship, since Pakistan stands on India's northeastern and northwestern borders.

Kashmir situation. In Kashmir itself, communal tensions have recently increased as they have also in the two Bengal states, one in East Pakistan and one in eastern India. A stolen Moslem relic precipitated demonstrations in early 1964 in Srinigar, capital of the Vale, which turned against the Indian puppet government. Although the relic was eventually recovered, protests and dissatisfaction with the government continued. India thereupon removed the government, replacing it with a less corrupt administration.

In April India freed the popular Moslem leader Sheikh Abdullah, former Prime Minister of Kashmir, who had been imprisoned since 1954. Abdullah conferred several times with Prime Minister Nehru on the future of Kashmir. Their talks were not made public but Abdullah had earlier made it clear that any solution must be acceptable to the Kashmiris as well as to the Pakistanis and Indians. Abdullah has also conferred with President Ayub of Pakistan. Nehru's successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, agreed to meet Ayub at the July Commonwealth conference in London but illness prevented his attending. Ayub's somewhat conciliatory public utterances since Nehru's death and Shastri's willingness to explore their problems may permit some negotiation on Kashmir.

Background Reading:

"Danger in Kashmir," Korbelt, Joseph; Princeton University Press, 1954

"Two Nations and Kashmir," Birdwood, Baron Christopher Bromhead; London: R. Hale, 1956